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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1136th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 March 2017

On the celebration of International Women's Day

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, I should like to congratulate all our esteemed female colleagues on International Women's Day, which we celebrated on 8 March, and to wish them love, success and prosperity.

In Russia this holiday traditionally enjoys wide popularity and is declared a day off. However, in our country this is not just an occasion for congratulating women. This is an opportunity to express genuine respect for female workers and mothers and to emphasize the importance of taking care of them. Such an attitude towards a woman and understanding the importance of her social and family role should exist even at the level of child-rearing.

This day also serves as an additional occasion for drawing attention to women's issues, motherhood and women's health, education and training, and increased opportunities for women to participate in all spheres of life, including governance.

Unfortunately, our Organization devotes little attention to such important issues as the role of women in child-rearing, as well as to the preservation of cultural, religious, moral and family values. Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights determines that: "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." Meanwhile, the problems of the family have also so far received little attention from the OSCE. Nevertheless, the protection of the family is now particularly relevant against the backdrop of the aggressive imposition of neo-liberal views that are destructive for the traditional family institution.

The OSCE has solid achievements in promoting gender equality, including the corresponding 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. But problems remain. We believe that the main thing today is to focus on creating conditions for women and men to realize their full potential. In the field of employment, all discriminatory restrictions must be eliminated. The task of States is to ensure that women have a balanced

family and professional life. Combating violence against women in all its forms and manifestations remains an imperative.

Many States underestimate the importance of the economic and social rights of women, whose situation has deteriorated markedly under the impact of the economic crisis. It is necessary to work towards correcting the imbalance by getting the OSCE to focus on promoting equality of rights and opportunities for women and men in the economic, social and cultural fields.

Thank you for your attention.